

**Vladimir  
Mayakovsky**

**WHAT SHALL I BE ?**







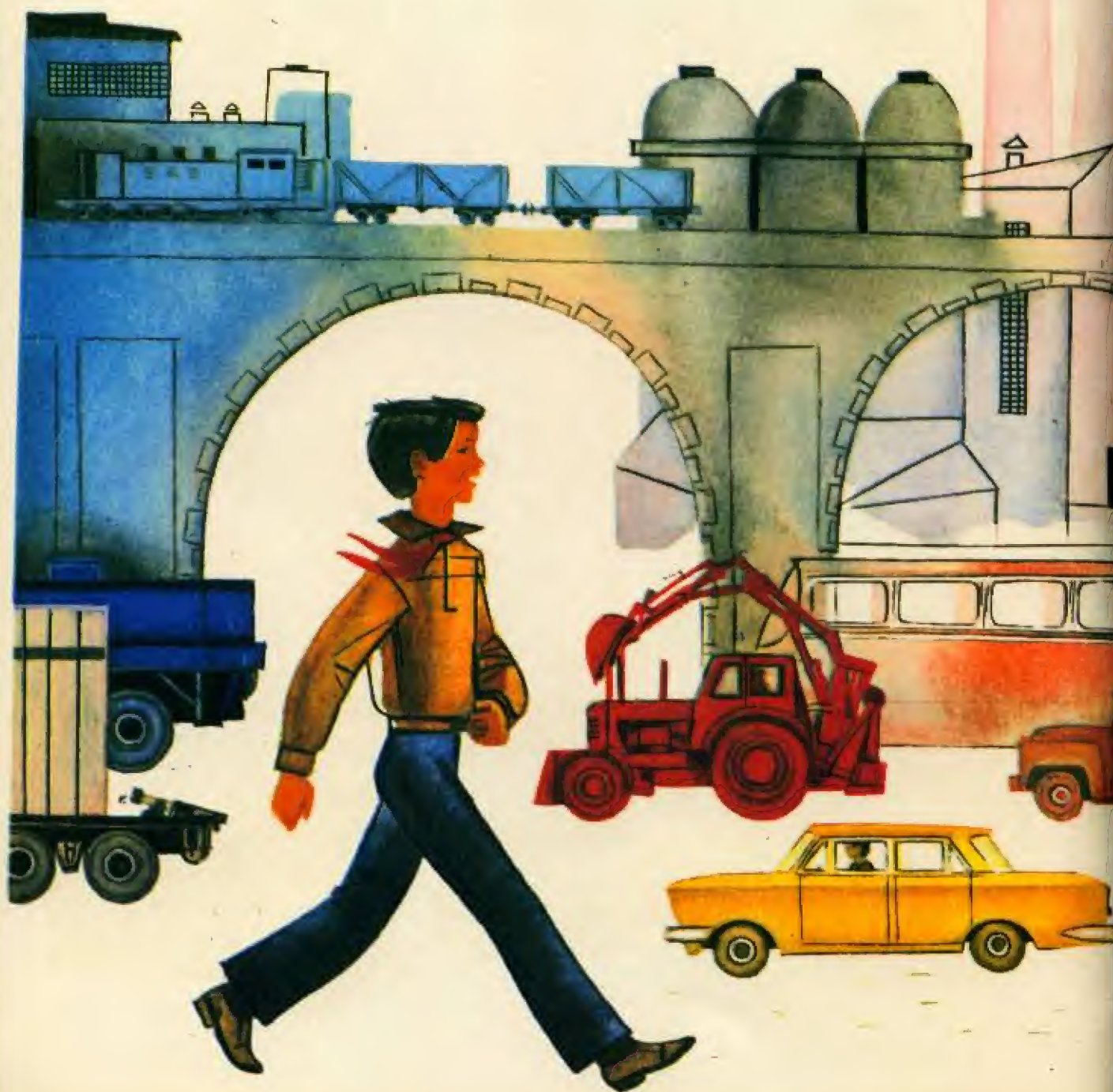
**Vladimir Mayakovsky**

# **WHAT SHALL I BE ?**



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Time gets along, and I grow up;  
I'm seventeen next year,  
What shall I choose—  
                    what sort of job  
to start  
                    on my career?

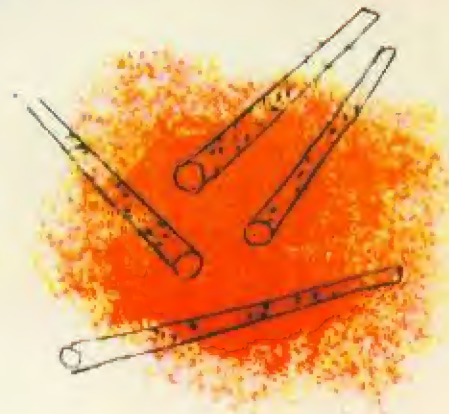








Carpenters are clever folk.  
Making furniture's no joke;  
we take  
a big, round log,  
first thing,  
and to a bench  
the log we bring.  
Now we saw it—  
like that!—  
into planks,  
long and flat.  
After working such a lot  
the busy saw  
becomes red-hot.  
Round about the sawdust flies—  
there in yellow heaps it lies.









Now  
we take a plane  
and set to work again.  
Back and forth,  
to and fro—  
off the knots and, snags all go.







If  
we need  
a ball or knob  
a lathe is used  
to do the job.  
One by one we make the parts,  
then the work of joining starts.  
Wardrobe, armchair,  
table, chest—  
neat and strong—  
the very best!











The scaffolding goes up sky-high;  
to look down makes you dizzy.

Where

the work's too hard for man  
cranes and pulleys

lend a hand;

steel girders

they hoist up like sticks  
together with

whole piles of bricks.

We lay tin sheets upon the roof  
to make it strong

and waterproof.

The house is ready,

spacious, tall,

and beautiful to see.

There's room enough in it for all  
for every family.













It's good to be a builder,  
but a doctor's job's no worse.  
I'd gladly cure sick children,  
just let them teach me first.

I'd go to Pete,

I'd go to Bill:

"Hello there, boys!

Now, who is ill?"

Stick your tongue out—

right you are—

that's the spirit—

now say *Ah!*

Put this thermometer

under your tongue.





Don't be afraid,  
you won't get stung!"

I'll ask little Bill  
to swallow a pill  
and give powders to Pete;  
each and every I'll treat!  
I'll tell little Ned  
to stay in bed  
till he's healthy again  
and forgets his pain!  
With a pat on his tummy  
I'll turn to his Mummy  
and give her prescriptions  
for medicine drops.

I'll tell her they ought to  
be taken in water  
three times a day  
till the fever stops.









Some jobs

for one.









Together, though, we'll get them done.  
Mighty scissors go snip-snip,  
cutting iron,

strip by strip.

Cranes go rolling,  
huge loads hauling.  
Steam-presses pat  
steel ingots flat.







Driving lathes

or smelting metal—  
every job takes skill and mettle,  
and nobody can boast  
that his is needed most.  
I'll make an iron nut,

and you  
forge a tightly-fitting screw.  
Then the work of each,  
non-stop,  
goes to the assembly-shop.

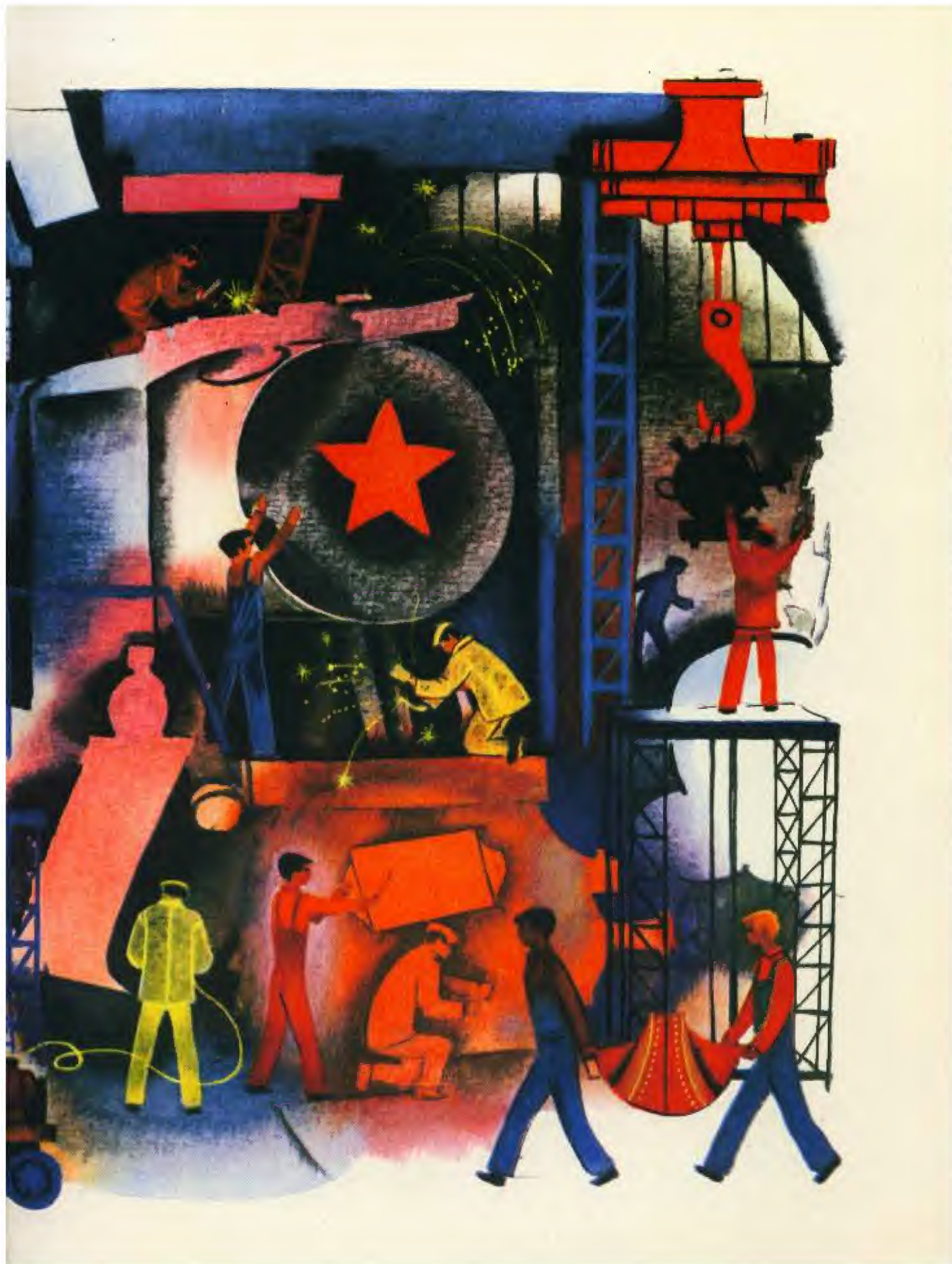




Every screw  
                    gets in its hole,  
fixing parts  
                    into one whole.  
The rafters shake,  
such a noise we make.  
Thunder,  
                    lightning,  
almost frightening!  
And now an engine,  
                    huge and strong,  
rolls out  
                    to pull a train along.



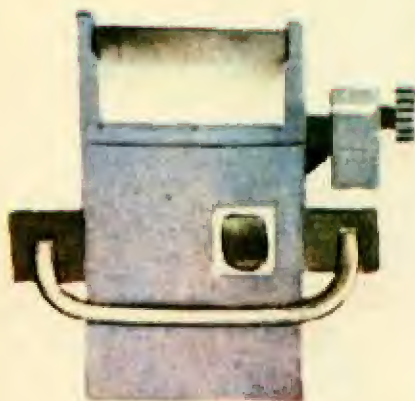








It's jolly good,  
a factory,  
but a tramcar is no worse.  
A conductor's  
is the job for me,  
just let them teach me first.  
Conductors!  
Aren't they lucky chaps!  
With great big bags  
on leather straps,  
everywhere  
and all day long  
in their trams  
they ride along,  
selling tickets to us all:  
parents, children,  
big and small,  
tickets yellow,  
blue and red  
for me, for you,  
for Pete and Ned.  
Along rails we ride  
through the traffic tide.  
Now the rails have ended;  
get out,  
everyone!  
Isn't it splendid,  
the woods,  
the sun!









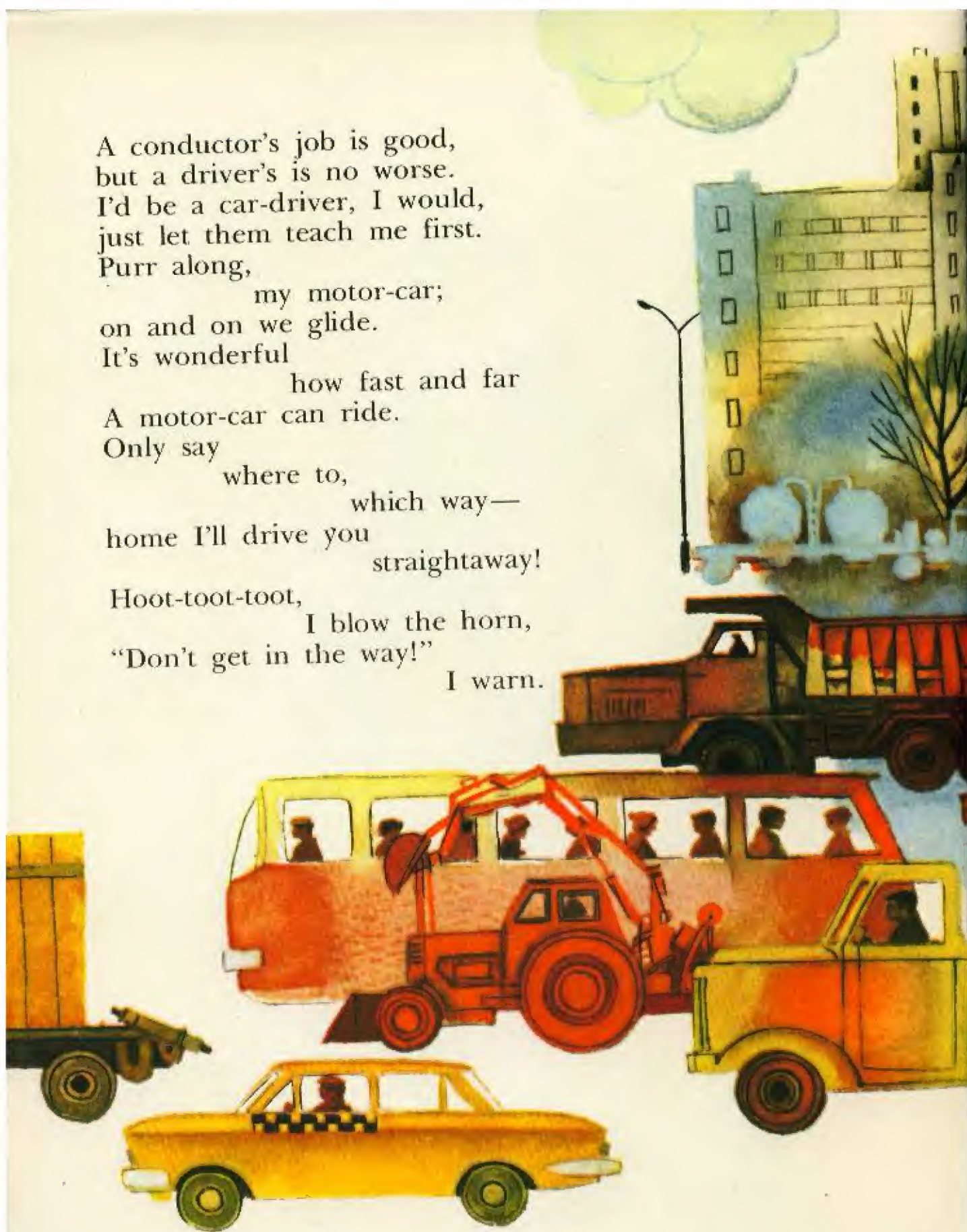
A conductor's job is good,  
but a driver's is no worse.  
I'd be a car-driver, I would,  
just let them teach me first.  
Purr along,

                    my motor-car;  
on and on we glide.  
It's wonderful

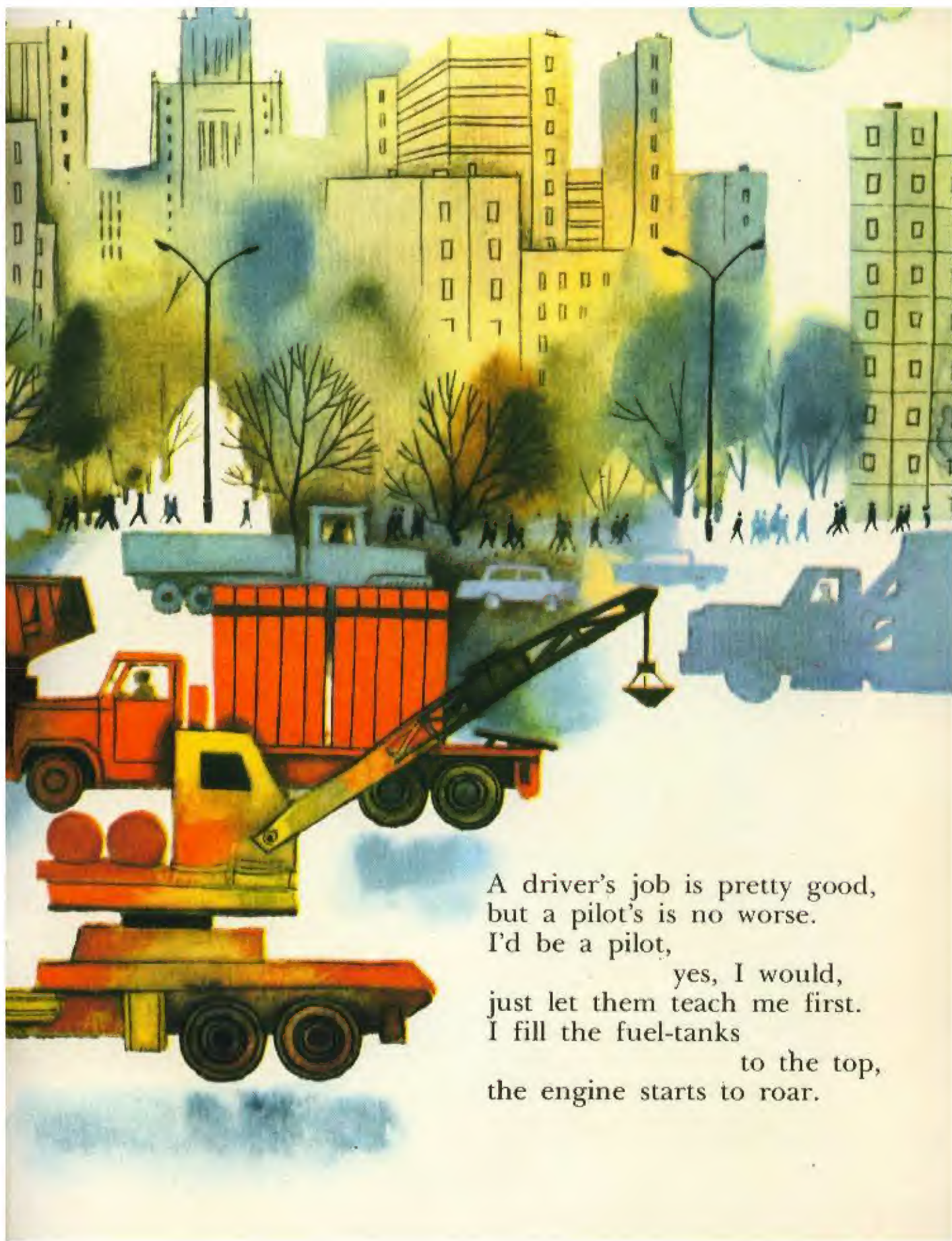
                    how fast and far  
A motor-car can ride.  
Only say

                    where to,  
                    which way—  
home I'll drive you  
                    straightaway!

Hoot-toot-toot,  
                    I blow the horn,  
"Don't get in the way!"  
                    I warn.







A driver's job is pretty good,  
but a pilot's is no worse.  
I'd be a pilot,

yes, I would,  
just let them teach me first.  
I fill the fuel-tanks  
to the top,  
the engine starts to roar.





Fly me,  
engine,  
up and up,

where the eagles soar!  
It doesn't matter  
if we meet  
rain or snow

or hail and sleet—  
up we go above the clouds  
gathering in fluffy crowds!  
Like the birds  
my plane and I  
over seas and oceans fly.

Drive me, engine, to the moon,  
a planet and a star,  
although I know how very far  
the stars and planets are!





It's true, a pilot's job is good,  
but is a sailor's worse?  
I'd be a sailor-lad,

I would,  
just let them teach me first!  
My sailor-hat's  
got ribbon-tails,  
there's anchors  
on my sleeves;  
from coast to coast  
my steamer sails  
across the seven seas!








The waves leap high,  
the billows toss,  
all roaring angrily.  
But I just skim  
across their tops,  
no waves too high for me!







A stylized illustration on a cream-colored background. In the upper left, a white, fluffy cloud with a blue outline contains a small green bird in flight. On the right side, a portion of a sailboat is visible, featuring a large white sail, a blue sail, and a red net-like structure. The text is positioned in the lower left quadrant.

Calm down,  
                    mad tempest,  
                            shut your mouth,  
give up, wind,  
                    and don't wail!  
I'll reach the Poles,  
                    both North and South,  
in spite of any gale!







And now my story's told at last,  
I hope you've understood:  
choose any job  
                    that suits your taste,  
for any job  
                    is good!





